

Pentagon: War and Protest

I started to look for my daughters—Elizabeth, 20, and Susan, 17, in the crowd at the Pentagon Mall, I became aware that some of the seated people were singing softly. Others were quietly talking to each other. Suddenly one of the soldiers began to shuffle his feet forward, pressing hard upon one individual seated in front of him, and quickly two or three troopers grabbed the man and pulled him behind their line. I distinctly saw the marshals and soldiers clubbing an individual on his head and shoulders and back as he squirmed on the ground trying to avoid the clubs. . . . I called to the girls to come back where I was. A well-dressed man near Liz shouted at me, "Go away. You're putting us in great danger." It is obvious that these people had one objective. To sit there as quietly and peacefully as possible, to give the military no excuse for attacking them. . . . I was appalled by what I had seen. I can swear under oath that during the entire time I was on the Pentagon Mall there was not one announcement by the military telling the protesters they were in a restricted area or that they were off limits. . . . I do not believe that our top government officials are evil. But I believe they no longer feel the obligation to protect and respect the rights of dissenters. . . . As a father, I darn well know that young people are not always right. But I fear their disillusionment more than their disobedience.

**Albert H. Gaynes, Businessman,
Hastings on Hudson, New York**

I voted against the "peace candidate" in '64, and now I wear the entrapped dove button on my business suit. Things have changed. . . . The troops came up behind the demonstrators and row by row beat them with rifle butts and hauled them off to waiting trucks. Portable loudspeakers (used by demonstrators) repeatedly stated the peace position to the frozen-faced soldiers. When dawn broke and the news media returned Sunday morning, the soldiers were nice as pie so long as they were on camera. People sitting in were being carried away one by one. Once out of camera range, they were violently thrown into trucks. . . . Little of the brutality was reported in any of the papers we read or on radio stations we heard. The American public had a warped picture of the weekend.

**Charles W. Peters, Advertising Exec.,
Shrub Oak, New York**

One soldier spilled the water from his canteen on the ground in order to add to the discomfort of the female demonstrator at his feet. She cursed at him — understandably, I think, and shifted her body. She lost her balance and her shoulder hit the rifle at the soldier's side. He raised the rifle, and with its butt, came down hard on the girl's leg. The girl tried to move back but was not fast enough to avoid the billyclub of a soldier in the second row of troops. At least four times that soldier hit her with all his force, then as she lay covering her head with her arms, thrust his club swordlike between her hands into her face. Two more troops came up and began dragging the girl toward the Pentagon. . . . She twisted her body so we could see her face. But there was no face there: all we saw were some raw skin and blood. We couldn't see even if she was crying — her eyes had filled with the blood pouring down her head. She vomited, and that too was blood. Then they rushed her away.

**Harvey Mayes, English Department,
Hunter College, New York**

. . . After about 6:00 p.m. and until well into the morning of Sunday there were many beatings and arrests in the area where I spent the night. Not a single one was for acts of civil disobedience or violence. We sat in an area in which we were told we were legal until midnight Sunday. . . . The number of people wounded has been said to be 47, but that is the number of the arrested wounded. I personally saw many young people with bloodied heads, and one young man lying unconscious for about two hours. . . . Not once did the troops or marshals announce that we had to move from where we were, or that we were violating any kind of law whatsoever. The worst moment came between 11 and midnight, when the troops and marshals pushed forward in a wedge to cut our group in two. Clubs and rifle butts were flailing everywhere. The troops attacked a group of young people, boys and girls, who were sitting quietly, who were unarmed, who were not breaking any law. They were attacked by armed soldiers. . . . I have seen violence in the South and in World War II, but I have never seen anything as brutal as that attack.

**Douglas F. Dowd,
Prof. of Economics,
Cornell University, New York**

A U.S. marshal raised his club high above his head, brought it down full force on the head of a young man, who had failed to

move when ordered. She had two ribs broken. . . . When marshals arrested a young man on the front line, some demonstrators in the back began to throw things. Others shouted "Stop it! Sit down! The troops aren't the enemy!" and finally forced the throwing to stop. The crowd then carried on a long discussion of what violence meant, and agreed to remain nonviolent. . . . Demonstrators sang "America the Beautiful" to the troops, offered them food and water, talked with them (and got responses).

**Arthur I. Waskow,
Institute for Policy Studies,
Washington, D.C.**

The Washington Sunday Star of Oct. 22 blamed 200-300 war resisters for an outbreak of violence at 10:30 p.m. What occurred, which many of the troops saw and opposed, was an attack by a group of U.S. marshals who, without provocation or warning, used clubs and rifles to beat quietly sitting protesters. In spite of this attack, which was loudly condemned by some, good rapport was established between many of the war protesters, MPs and a few U.S. marshals. In a private conversation a marshal stated that most of them had been made marshals for the occasion at low pay.

**William C. Davidson,
Assoc. Prof. of Physics,
Haverford College, Pennsylvania**

The troops tear-gassed us at least twice, and only the self-discipline of the marchers prevented a riot. Later, on the steps, the resisters were quiet and orderly.

**Statement by Anthony Hellbut,
Dept. of English,
Washington Square College,
New York University**

Late Saturday night we heard General O'Malley's radio denial that the gas had been used. We heard and saw this claim supported for several days by some of the very newsmen we must have seen running from the gas with handkerchiefs to their faces. . . . A priest talked quietly to the troops. He explained again and again that we love our country and that this was why we couldn't stand aside while she committed such grievous wrongs. He implored the soldiers to be more gentle as they dragged each demonstrator away. The man was in his fifties or sixties. When the soldiers finally decided to arrest him, he was afforded a particularly brutal treatment. Needless to say, this priest made no attempt to resist. He was pulled at his hair as he

was yanked off the ground and who bobbed him up and down against the asphalt as they prepared to drag him off and who placed their feet under him and kicked at his spine. Finally, they dragged him away.

**Statement by
Karsten J. and Paula Struhl,
respectively, Philosophy
Depts., Long Island Univ.
and Hunter College, New York**

The young people's sense of seriousness is what impressed one most while standing on the Pentagon steps at midnight. The seriousness inspired a calm — even a cheerfulness — which withstood the provocation of clubs, rifles, curses and kicks. Camaraderie, dedication, understanding, good humor — these, not violence, are the words which properly describe the mood of those shivering youngsters. The boys and girls I talked with had not previously been involved in protest actions; indeed, had never given any thought to civil disobedience.

**Louis Kampf,
Assoc. Prof. of Humanities,
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology**

Most of us who breached the artificial line drawn by the authorities had hoped to be arrested for the *meaningful and nonviolent* act of approaching the Pentagon doors. As the hours passed, more bloodied heads, individual beatings (30 concussions were treated) and arrests followed out of sight of the television cameras.

**Prof. Arthur Samuels, Ph.D.,
Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York**

Several weeks prior to the march we contacted officials in the D.C. Health Department and, on behalf of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, offered the services of a group of physicians to set up or help staff emergency first-aid stations for the Mobilization. Assurances were given that plans had already been made. A similar offer was made to medical officials in the Military District of Washington, under whose jurisdiction came the responsibility for medical facilities at the Pentagon grounds. They rejected our offer. . . . The facilities at the Pentagon were dangerously inadequate. During the afternoon a U.S. marshal arbitrarily moved the Red Cross unit to an area inaccessible to everyone except those who were later arrested. . . . By late afternoon it became obvious that there were many people who needed im-



Benedict J. Fernandez, ACU

Eye-witness Report

mediate medical attention and a volunteer group of physicians decided to set up an emergency first-aid station. No equipment, water, lights or readily available ambulance facilities were provided, and we were repeatedly refused medical supplies by the military authorities. From 5 to 8 that Saturday evening we treated about 40 people, using some equipment carried in from facilities several miles from the Pentagon. Included among the injured were many severe lacerations, several fractures, many tear-gas injuries and three cases of asthma. Some of the cases were of such severity that, after preliminary evaluation, they had to be taken to nearby hospitals. It must be said that it is very fortunate that no one died.

Sidney M. Wolfe, M.D.,
Arthur Frank, M.D., and
Jesse Roth, M.D.

The news media gave a distorted account of the mood of the demonstrators. I was struck by its seriousness and the relative absence of singing and chanting. . . . For the most part the soldiers acted with restraint, as they should have. However, there were instances of unnecessary force which might be traced to the reports that sergeants and officers consistently referred to the demonstrators as "the enemy," thus creating a battle-like atmosphere. The Pentagon denials concerning the use of tear gas are just one more example of the untrustworthiness of any statements concerning the war issued out of the Executive Branch.

Neil Fabricant,
Lawyer, New York City

... Other harassments were stupidly petty. At about 5:30 in the morning, a soldier walked along the line emptying cans of water on our backs.

Paul Lauter and
Florence Howe, respectively
Assoc. Prof., Antioch College,
and Asst Prof., Goucher College

By sundown, 2,000 demonstrators had gained forbidden territory on the closest parking terrace, but they were hemmed in by three ranks of troops. . . . The 6,000 troops (National Guardsmen, airborne infantrymen, military police, armed Federal marshals) had very little to do during the night. . . . Those on the front steps stood stiffly at attention. . . . Only the few dozen soldiers in the front lines, pressed against the shivering sit-ins, saw any action, and even that was sporadic. One or two detachments had thrown tear gas (the Pentagon denied it, but reporters and demonstrators saw the soldiers in the act). Early in the morning, some of the soldiers relieved their obvious boredom by kicking seated demonstrators or jamming rifle butts into their spines.

Andrew Kopkind, writer,
New Statesman

I saw young men lying on the ground defenseless, mercilessly clubbed by U.S. marshals. I was gassed. I was kicked and struck on the back with a rifle butt as I sat quietly, in civil disobedience, in front of the "fortress." I watched a Catholic priest — Father Connor — beg the marshals not to be brutal as, with a club held in both hands under the chin, they jerked and dragged young men and women through the line where they sat. . . .

Mitchell Goodman, writer, New York

The confrontation above the steps of the Pentagon was a nonviolent vigil. It was for the most part orderly in spite of repeated provocations by the administration police. We earnestly and lovingly attempted to appeal to that bit of God in each of the men who were forced to treat us as their enemy. . . . I was surrounded by MPs and marshals. I had gone limp. I continued to talk of love and continued to appeal to their humanity. The reply was "Okay, lover boy." I was prodded and beaten on the body. A marshal began beating on the soles of my feet. Sticks were jabbed in the soft parts of my body. Two night sticks were clamped on my throat and two marshals lifted me up. I couldn't breathe or speak. They threw me back on the ground, twisted my arms behind my back and handcuffed me and carried me for a minute by the handcuffs. Camera lights went on. A marshal said to carry me by arms and legs. I non-cooperated all the way to Occoquan [workhouse], was dropped, kicked, etc. All the time I was being carried I tried to appeal to the humanity of my persecutors. . . . I trust in the power of the Spirit and know it will sustain me through my trials.

Jerry D. Cottin, Philadelphia

The soldiers began to push two young men at the head of the crowd at about 10:30 p.m. A Federal marshal burst through the line of troops and began to savagely beat the two young men as a prelude to their arrest. Time after time his club

Rev. David M. Gracie,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

On Saturday, Oct. 21, at about 5 o'clock, I witnessed two groups of soldiers being sent into a massive crowd gathered below the Mall entrance to the Pentagon. They behaved with restraint. They were immediately surrounded by the crowd. There was no apparent shoving by the demonstrators. Then, suddenly, from the side, came several U.S. marshals, then a dozen. Over the shrubbery they went, freely swinging their clubs, apparently trying to free the troops. In my opinion their action clearly provoked the crowd. Certainly the marshals brought unnecessary bloodshed.

the Rev. Thomas Lee Hayes,
Executive Director,
Episcopal Peace Fellowship,
New York

We saw gas masks on soldier's faces, gas sprayed at the crowd, people with streaming eyes overcome with retching. . . . In the 14 hours we were with the main body of some 1,500 demonstrators on the Mall, we neither saw nor heard of any act of violence to the troops or U.S. marshals. On the other hand, we saw and suffered from violence at the hands — and feet — of marshals and Army officers. And their violence was systematic and deliberate, a fundamental part of their strategy. They wanted us gone, but they did not want to arrest 2,000 people, nor did they want to drive all of us out with gas or clubs or guns. And so they had to frighten us, wear us down, pick off leaders, keep us unsettled. . . . For most of Saturday night, unprovoked arrests were accompanied by great violence. People were pulled away with no warning, clubbed and kicked in the sight of their friends; women and sleeping demonstrators were favorite targets. Those who held on to the sleeping were beaten and also dragged away.

smashed down upon the heads and backs of his two victims. The soldiers joined in brutally and repeatedly brought their rifle butts down upon the bodies of the demonstrators. The two young men were literally being beaten to death. I was dazed by disbelief. . . . I reached out and tried to drag the victims back into the protection of the crowd. The Federal marshal's club immediately thrust down upon my hand, this being repeated half a dozen times. A soldier added his rifle butt to the assault.

Cliff Forstadt, student,
Chr. Judicial Board,
Hunter College, New York

The only violence I saw was that practiced against the demonstrators by Federal marshals and troops. This violence was selective and tactical, not widespread. . . . Some persons — frequently girls — were kicked and clubbed repeatedly and very severely. I believe this was done tactically, to shock and discourage the crowd from staying on. But it was clear that several of the officers, and particularly the marshals, enjoyed doing it. . . . If any complaints or angry shouts came from the crowd, they were directed at the officers and marshals responsible for the brutality. Widespread sympathy for the soldiers was expressed throughout the 12 hours that I was present.

Allan Brick, Ph.D.,
Lutherville, Maryland

At this point an MP would explode a tear-gas canister, driving the crowd back. I saw many such thrown by the troops. At one point, while the crowd was still choking and blinded from the gas, a phalanx of troops formed, 10 columns and seven or eight deep. They had gas masks on, and the bayonets on their rifles were fixed and unsheathed. They marched toward the crowd, which retreated at first and then sat down. Though I saw this pattern frequently repeated, it seemed to me that in general both the troops and the demonstrators were fairly restrained.

Ira Glasser, Associate Director,
New York Civil Liberties Union

I was one of the volunteer attorneys helping the people at Occoquan Workhouse to which demonstrators were taken following their arrest. Although most of the people arrested were charged simply with violating a regulation about where they could go (equivalent to a park rule about keeping off the grass), there was a substantial number of people bearing bruises and otherwise showing the effects of having been beaten and these people were usually charged with assault, apparently to justify the beatings inflicted upon them.

Jeremiah Gutman, Lawyer, New York

Continued

NEW YORK TIMES

The most brutal acts that I myself saw occurred Saturday night around 10 p.m. on an access road leading to the Pentagon, guarded by about 15 deputy U.S. marshals. The marshals ran at a dozen or so demonstrators sitting on the road with linked arms, clubbing them severely on the legs, face and head, and shouting at them. There were no cars approaching. I was yelling at the marshals to stop their clubbing and to get medical help for a protester whose face was dripping blood when a marshal came directly at me shouting, "Get that big fat one." I was the first person thrown into the waiting paddy wagon.

*Jay Schulman,
Asst Prof., School of Industrial and
Labor Relations, Cornell University*

My main fear was claustrophobia and trampling. About 8 p.m. they started grabbing people — dragging them off and arresting them. Quite soon I was next to the troop lines and all of a sudden I heard that tear gas was being used. . . . The troops suddenly went crazy. It seemed they were kicking at us, tugging at the people . . . and all of a sudden it was just a sprawl of bodies. . . . I was on top of several people. I was very exposed and this was the time I started getting hit on the head. . . . So for some reason or other I headed for the troops, through their legs. I think I remember getting through three rows of troops — it seemed like that—then I passed out.

*Christie Huldekoper,
Art Student, New York City*

A Federal marshal came down the line and spoke quickly to several MPs in front of me. Then suddenly those MPs moved forward, kicking at me. At the same time a Federal marshal began striking me on the head. I brought my knees up to my chest, covered my head with my arms, and tucked my head down. As I did this the marshal stabbed at me with his billy club and succeeded in hitting me in the genitals. Then I was grabbed by the legs and dragged to a van about 150 yards distant. Another marshal, saying "Watch out for the press, watch out for the press," picked me up by the shoulders, and I was thrown into the van.

*John Mark Blown,
Philadelphia*

NEW YORK TIMES

DEC 8 1967